

A.2.5: Assign specific planning oversight responsibilities to an appropriate person in the district. Expect that this person will be part of all planning efforts in the district and will review with appropriate personnel the process used for planning and the coordination of planning over time.

A.2.6: Provide staff development to district administrators on the long-range planning process.

A.2.7: Continue to use a common planning format or template for all annual district and campus plans so that communication among all stakeholders is enhanced. Continue to include a summary listing of goals and the signatures of all planning team members as a part of each annual improvement plan in order to document stakeholder involvement.

A.2.8: Ensure that the annual planning process includes a formative and summative evaluation of progress. Provide these to the district, campus, and division or department committees responsible for constructing and monitoring each improvement plan.

A.2.9: Implement a process under the leadership of senior staff to evaluate the system plan and recommend revisions based on findings on an annual basis.

A.2.10: Present progress reports on the implementation of the long-range system plan to the board and the community.

A.2.11: Utilize available technology to place all current plans on the district web site for ease in periodically referencing specific plans, increasing communications and collaboration among the campuses and the district building linkages between planning documents, and improving focus on district goals and objectives.

Recommendation 3: Establish and Implement Policies and Practices that Provide for Equitable Treatment and Comparable Learning Opportunities for All Students.

A focused and sustained effort will be required to eliminate the practices and vestiges of inequalities and inequities that currently exist throughout the district. The board of trustees, administrative staff, teachers, parents, community members, and students must all play a role in achieving this goal.

The auditors found many instances of inequity and inconsistency that deter optimal learning conditions for all students, based on gender, economic status, and ethnicity of students (see Finding 3.2). Furthermore, there is an absence of board policy that sends a clear and non-negotiable message to all stakeholders regarding fairness and equity (see Finding 1.1). Equity issues are not substantially addressed in planning efforts of the district (see Finding 1.2) or in the assignment of administrative staff (see Finding 1.3 and Finding 3.2).

Curriculum design is not adequately comprehensive enough nor is curriculum delivery effective or sensitive enough to ensure that all students learn at comparable levels (see Finding 2.3, Finding 2.4, Finding 3.1, and Finding 3.3). Consequently, significant Anglo-Hispanic achievement gaps continue to exist, even after the acknowledgement by and advisement of regulatory agency personnel (see Finding 3.2 and Finding 4.3). The current allocation of human, learning, and financial resources does not support equitable opportunities for students based on need (see Finding 5.2).

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Board of Trustees:

G.3.1: Communicate high expectations for all students at all times to all stakeholders of the district.

G.3.2: Publicize a sustained commitment to overcome the problems of inequity and inequality in the district.

G.3.3: Develop new and/or revise existing board policies that address the following equity and equality related issues:

- The board's overall expectation for equity and fairness in all district practices.

- Increased access to advanced academic programs and related opportunities of students from all demographic groups, with emphasis upon males, economically disadvantaged, and Hispanic students.
- Allocation of human, learning, and financial resources based on differential needs of students.
- Elimination of detrimental student treatment practices, student grouping, and student placement.
- Aggressive recruitment and employment of Hispanic teachers.
- Assignment of authority to the superintendent to take actions necessary to eliminate any practice not covered by policy that inhibits the district's effort to eliminate inequities and inequalities.

G.3.4: Include a criterion in the superintendent's annual performance evaluation that addresses elimination of the Anglo-Hispanic achievement gaps.

G.3.5: Require routine, public updates from the superintendent (i.e., at a board meeting) regarding efforts and progress in reducing or eliminating inequities and inequalities throughout the district.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Superintendent:

A.3.1: Assist the board in developing and/or revising policies as recommended above.

A.3.2: Develop and implement administrative regulations and operational guidelines that provide sufficient direction to staff regarding operationalizing policy.

A.3.3: Engage the entire administrative staff in efforts to eliminate inequities and inconsistencies across the district. Assign administrative staff responsibility for monitoring progress. Include updates and discussion sessions regarding progress on staff meeting agendas. Adjust plans or strategies as necessary.

A.3.4: Direct school counselors to recruit Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students into advanced academic programs and related activities (i.e., AP courses, applying for college scholarships, preparing for and taking the ACT and SAT, National Honor Society). Monitor results.

A.3.5: Include a component in the district's long-range plan to eliminate the achievement gaps between Anglo and Hispanic students in all subject areas, at all grade levels. Include the following elements:

- A comprehensive needs assessment at each campus based on the analysis of disaggregated achievement data. The unit of analysis must be specific enough to target instruction with clinical precision, i.e., at the learner objective level.
- An emphasis at the primary grades, but without ignoring students at any grade level.
- The identification of "what works" or "best practices" in working with Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students and selectively choosing a few for implementation. This can be accomplished by reviewing the literature on the Internet; investigating what other campuses and districts in the state with similar student populations have done to eliminate achievement gaps; soliciting assistance from the Region 20 Education Service Center, TEA, or Sul Ross University at Uvalde; and/or seeking help from identified experts in the field.
- A review of the recommendations in the TEA Accreditation Report, the Office of Civil Rights Report, and the Bilingual/ESL Compliance Report. Comply with those that are still appropriate.
- Quality and sustained staff development focused at the identified teaching-learning needs by campus.
- Both short-term and longitudinal evaluation components that provide benchmark and summative evaluation data for making revisions to the plan.

A.3.6: Include resource considerations for meeting the achievement gap elimination goal in the annual budget that is presented to the board of trustees for approval.

A.3.7: Include an accountability criterion for eliminating student achievement gaps in principals' and central office administrators' annual performance evaluations.

A.3.8: Resolve the problem at Batesville Middle School regarding students not having access to Pre-Advanced Placement courses, Junior National Honor Society, and any other areas of inequality that are currently known and/or discovered during the process. One option could be to extend the current district effort of offering Algebra I via distance learning to Batesville students.

A.3.9: Investigate thoroughly the participation and involvement of Batesville students after they enter Uvalde High School at grade 9. Include participation levels in all academic advanced courses and programs (AP, GT, academic UIL, National Honor Society) and involvement in extra-/co-curricular and social activities. Take action to address any observable variances between Batesville and Uvalde Junior High School students.

Efforts should begin immediately to address the problems of inequality and inequity within the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District, with satisfactory results accomplished within five years.

Recommendation 4: Develop a Table of Organization and Job Descriptions that Adhere to the Principles of Sound Organizational Management.

Effective school districts are organized in cost-effective ways with defined responsibilities, established role definitions, and clear role relationships. Clarity of function, manageable scope of responsibility, and adequacy of staff to perform the required work are hallmarks of a well-organized system.

The table of organization (TO) and supporting job descriptions did not meet audit criteria for sound organizational management (see Finding 1.3). The span of control for the superintendent was too great. Line and staff responsibilities were intermingled, and there was a problem with logical grouping of functions. Scalar relationships were not clearly portrayed. The chain of command in the table of organization was not consistent with the chain identified in job descriptions. The table of organization, though current, did not correlate with the job descriptions: there were no job descriptions for 29 positions in the table of organization; 24 positions described in job descriptions did not appear in the table of organization. A key obstacle to the development of a sound table of organization was the lack of consistency among qualifications, actual responsibility, grade structure, and job titles. The following actions are recommended to eliminate these problems and should be adopted through a systemic change process.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Board of Trustees:

G.4.1: Direct the superintendent to prepare and maintain accurate job descriptions for all authorized positions according to the criteria specified in Exhibit 1.3.3.

G.4.2: Direct the superintendent to revise the grade structure to ensure consistency among qualifications, actual responsibilities, grade structure, and job titles.

G.4.3: Direct the superintendent to revise the table of organization to conform to the management principles specified in Finding 1.3 and to review the table of organization annually during the budget development process, ensure that it accurately reflects the essential organizational structure, and present required changes to the board as part of the budget approval process.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Superintendent:

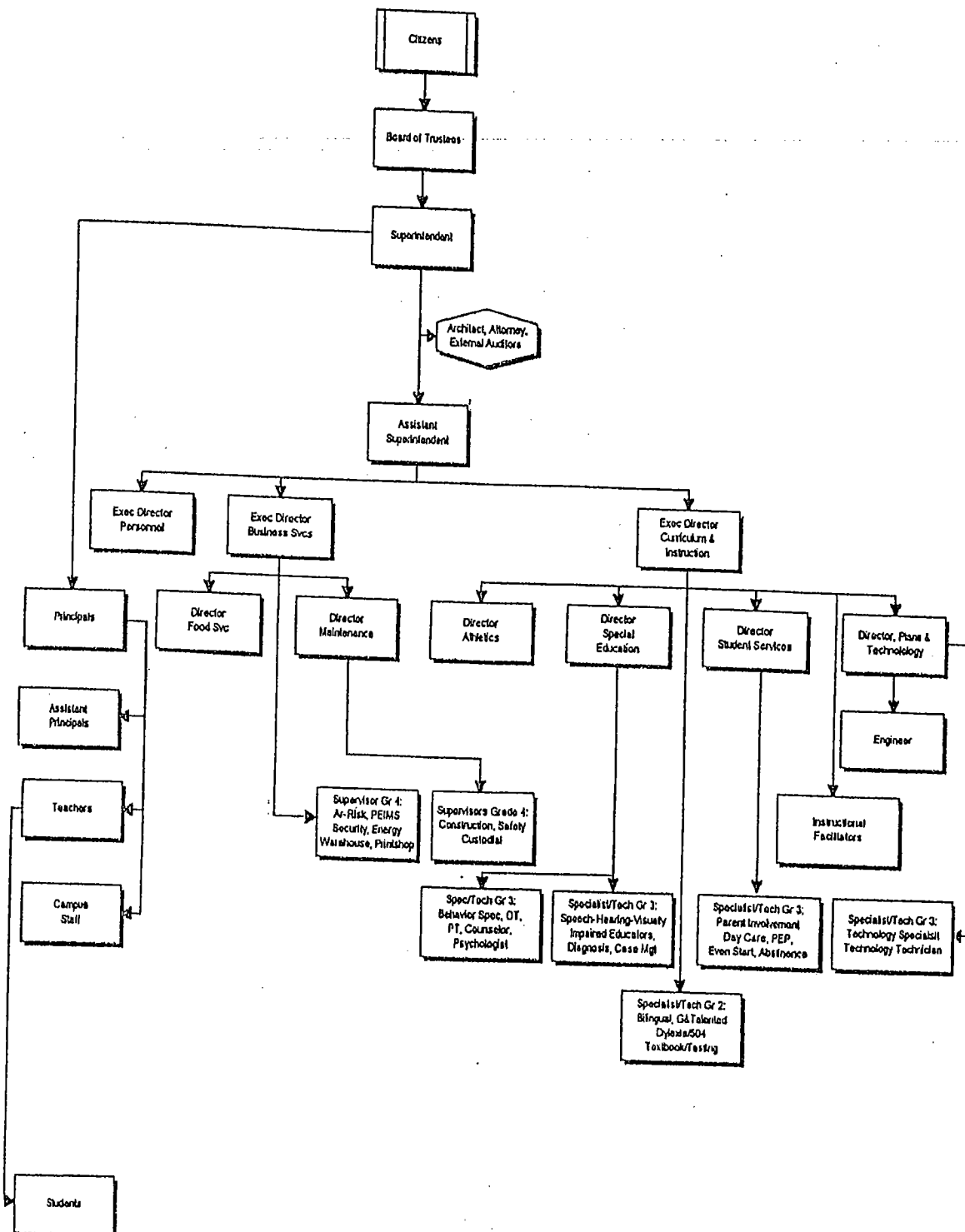
A.4.1: Execute the directives recommended in Actions G.4.1, G.4.2, and G.4.3, when issued by the board.

A.4.2: Once the grade structure and job descriptions are adjusted to provide consistency, revise the table of organization to comply with audit criteria identified in Finding 1.3. Exhibit R.4.1 is provided as an example of how the district might be reorganized. It is based roughly on the current pay grade structure, but should not be construed as a recommendation to downgrade or upgrade any individual

or position. These decisions, if necessary, must be made after a local analysis of job qualifications and responsibilities. However, the following specifics are recommended in the new table of organization:

- a. Maintain separation of line and staff functions, and limit the span of control for the Superintendent by having principals report directly to the Superintendent and the central office staff report directly to the Assistant Superintendent.
- b. Have the Director of Athletics report to the Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction because athletics is an instructional function.
- c. Include all essential positions, such as Elementary Instructional Facilitators and Safety Coordinator.
- d. Ensure that all employees report to only one supervisor and that the table of organization portrays the "one supervisor" relationship.

Exhibit R.4.1
Recommended Table of Organization
Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District



Recommendation 5: Establish and Implement a Budget Process that Reflects District Curricular Goals and Priorities.

A school district must ensure that curricular goals are met within the confines of the budget. An effective curriculum-driven budget establishes tangible links between resource allocations and curriculum goals, priorities, programs, methods, and evaluation data on student achievement and operational effectiveness. With these relationships in place and known, the district's leadership will have a creditable rationale for selection of programs to be funded, the amount of funding to allocate, and for the exclusion of competing programs. Further, district employees and constituents will have a better understanding of what is funded and why.

Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District policies and budgetary guidance require that the staff accomplish goals with available resources and that the allocation of those resources be prioritized according to the goals and objectives. Further, decisions are to be supported by program evaluation data. Auditors found that policies were not sufficiently comprehensive to support curriculum-driven budgeting (see Finding 1.1). Additionally, there were no goals for major segments of the curriculum (see Finding 2.1), and no long-range plan was available to provide consistent direction for budget expenditures (see Finding 2.1). Budgeting practices have been inconsistent with the district's own policy and the recommendations of the district's accounting firm (see Finding 5.1). Over time, resources have not been allocated according to a rational system of goals and priorities supported by data on achievement, needs, costs, or benefits (see Finding 4.3, Finding 5.2, and Finding 5.3). Finally, preservation of the district's resources was not supported by a facilities preventive maintenance plan or the safety policy enforcement (see Finding 5.4).

In order to improve the budgeting process, auditors developed the following recommendations for consideration by the board of trustees and the superintendent. However, it should be noted that the transition to a curriculum-driven budgeting process is complicated and should be implemented over a period of years.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Board of Trustees:

G.5.1: Direct the superintendent to submit draft policies for implementation of a curriculum-driven budgeting process. Using these submissions, the board should design, adopt, and monitor the implementation of curriculum-driven budget policies and curriculum goals. Include assessment of curricular and instructional needs based on the goals and objectives of the district. Adopt policies that permit and require the board and the administration to establish links between proposed budgetary allocations and the anticipated impact on individual programs. Require that budget execution be monitored and reported (though not exclusively) by comparing the actual costs and benefits of programs to the costs and benefits anticipated at the time the budget was approved.

G.5.2: Direct the superintendent to develop a timetable for making the transition to curriculum-driven budgeting and to present it to the board for approval. Phase in the transition over a four-year period. During the first year, select one or two curricular areas to be converted from a function/object budgeting to curriculum-driven program budgeting. In subsequent years, add other curricular areas to the process. Budgeting for capital outlay, purchased services, and maintenance should begin at zero and allocations justified on the basis of need, cost savings and other benefits.

G.5.3: To begin this transition, the board should direct the superintendent to conduct a performance evaluation of all district programs and activities using a comprehensive and standardized assessment system and present those evaluations to the board for review. The results of these evaluations may suggest the order in which programs should be phased into the curriculum-driven budgeting process (see Recommendation 2 for program evaluation process).

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Superintendent:

A.5.1: Draft curriculum-driven budgeting policies and a timetable for transition to a curriculum-driven budgeting process. Present them to the board for approval.

A.5.2: Conduct an evaluation of all district programs and activities using a comprehensive and standardized assessment system. Present those evaluations to the board for review (see Findings 4.3, 5.3, and Recommendation 2). Utilize the following process:

- a. Revise budget processes to support a curriculum-driven model by prioritizing, determining costs and proposed benefits, and evaluating the effectiveness of various curriculum components (e.g., language arts, science, mathematics, technology, and each intervention).
- b. Adjust budget development and accountability/responsibility relationships so that individual curricular programs become the focal points of the budget process. Program managers should be designated to develop and execute budgets for those programs.
- c. Use historical data, performance data, and cost effectiveness evaluations to determine which programs should be terminated or continued, and the level of funding for the latter.
- d. Design budgeting and evaluation procedures to permit determination of the cost effectiveness of programs down to the building level.
- e. Revise the program data form discussed in Finding 5.3 to assist in these tasks.

A.5.3: Continue meaningful involvement of school Site-based Decision-making Teams, the Superintendent's Cabinet, and the Superintendent's Advisory Council in the budgeting process.

A.5.4: Inform the staff and community that the budget is the financial expression of the district's educational priorities. Provide staff development for participants in the budget process to improve their understanding of and support for curriculum-driven budgeting. Emphasize the importance of assessment data in determining educational priorities and the allocation of resources.

A.5.5: Direct the staff to initiate the process of transition to a curriculum-driven budget using these steps:

- a. As, in the past, the district financial management officer will provide budget guidance as to how the budget is to be developed.
- b. The staff will identify educational programs and activities by need or purpose. Group similar or closely related programs and activities into broad functional areas, under the oversight of program directors. Sample functional areas could include elementary instruction, special education, gifted education, district governance, superintendent's office, financial services, warehousing, personnel services, and staff development. If necessary, realign organizational structure to conform to these functional areas. Allocate authority and responsibility for budget development to the functional group program directors for their respective groups and to program managers (such as school principals) within these functional groupings. Many of the current budget areas could be used as cores for these groupings.
- c. Using the previous year's budget allocation as a base, program managers will build incremental budget "packages" for their areas of responsibility. Each package should represent a level of activity that stands alone. This means that each package contains all of the human, material, and financial resources required to operate at a specific level of effectiveness in relationship to what was provided during the previous year. For example, a given program could be defined and packaged into units that provide services at (1) 90 percent of last year's budget, (2) 100 percent of last year's budget, and (3) 105 percent of last year's budget. These percentages will differ over time as the system becomes more sophisticated and data-driven. Each budget package will contain a statement of the program's purpose, its criteria for success, and how these will be evaluated, and consequences—in terms of performance results—if the package is funded or not funded.

- d. Program packages will then be given to appropriate staff members who will gather data that best describe the costs and benefits in terms of program outcomes of each incremental package. The staff should involve constituents and others (including principals, teachers, and support personnel) to review or establish program objectives, current service levels, desired service levels, and performance expectations. Based on this review, the staff will recommend service levels for all programs (i.e., the specific incremental packages to be adopted, such as the elementary education program package at 105 percent of last year's budget allocation). Recommendations go to program directors, who develop budgets for their functional area.
- e. Program directors will integrate past cost information, performance data, and staff recommendations to develop preliminary budget estimates for the District Budget Team or Administrative Cabinet. In some instances, program directors will also be cabinet members.
- f. The District Budget Team will review the goals, priorities, services levels, and projected costs and benefits inherent in the decision to be made; receive technical support from program managers who develop the incremental packages; and call upon influence groups such as principals, staff, PTA officers, employee associations, citizen bond committees, and site-based decision teams for advice during this stage of the budget development process. Some or all of these groups may have been involved at an earlier stage.
- g. With this input, the District Budget Team will evaluate and rank budget program packages. During this stage, budget requests will compete with each other for funding based on evaluation of need and effectiveness in accomplishing stated goals. There may be trade-offs among incremental packages in order to achieve goals within resource limits.
- h. Simultaneously, the district staff will build the capital outlay and improvement budget from a zero base each year with multi-year planning for improvements, including life-cycle replacement and preventive maintenance (see Recommendation 2). Prioritize health and safety factors, their impact on the learning environment, and protection of investment. Many capital needs change annually and do not reoccur once met and paid for. An example is construction costs. The budget planning process should reflect these changes while projecting life-cycle replacement costs of buildings and systems over five to 15 years.
- i. The District Budget Team will submit budget recommendations to the superintendent.
- j. The superintendent will review these recommendations with the Advisory Council, finalize budget allocations proposals, and recommend a budget to the board based on projected revenue and the aforementioned input from staff and constituencies.
- k. The superintendent will receive the approved budget from the board, establish programs at the increment levels authorized, and publish the budget.

V. SUMMARY

A curriculum management audit is an "exception" report. Data are gathered by the auditors from three sources: documents, interviews, and on-site visits and compared to audit standards and indicators. A school system is not compared to other systems and rated accordingly. This would be an inappropriate practice since there is no national or state system of education in place. Education is a local matter, and substantial authority and control remain vested in the hands of the locally elected or appointed boards of education.

The auditors subjected the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District to a comparison of predetermined standards and indicators of quality, and discrepancies were noted. These constitute the *findings* of the audit. The auditors then provided recommendations to help the district ameliorate the discrepancies noted in the report. The recommendations represent the auditors' "best judgment" about how to meet the discrepancies disclosed in the report. It is expected that the superintendent and his staff and the board may demur with some recommendations. However, they form the *starting point* for a discussion of how to deal with the documented findings.

Normal audit practice is the board of education *receives* an audit, they do not *accept* it. After review of the audit report, the board requests the response of its superintendent of schools. When the superintendent's response is received, then the board is in a position to act upon these two sets of recommendations. In this manner, the superintendent and the board are always accountable for what occurs in the school system after an audit report.

The Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District has had a relatively stable student population over the past decade with a slight decline in numbers the last several years. The 2000-2001 student enrollment was slightly over 5,200 students with 83 percent of the students being Hispanic and 17 percent of the students being Anglo. Approximately 73 percent of the student population is from economically disadvantaged homes. The district has maintained an "acceptable" rating based on the Texas Education Agency accountability standards; however, students within the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District have historically performed below the state average on state-mandated assessments as well as on optional college entrance examinations. Additionally, significant gaps between Anglo students' scores and the scores of Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students' scores have remained. As state standards increase, these gaps in achievement are worrisome. If district personnel do not develop ways in which Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students are accelerated through the learning process and have equal access to upper-level classes, the district rating of "acceptable" may be jeopardized.

Low expectations for the achievement of Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students were pervasive in interviews with school staff. These attitudes must change if Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District is to reach its goal of being a "recognized" district. All staff, especially school site staff, must act and eventually believe that all of the Uvalde students can achieve at high levels. Teachers and site administrators must be held accountable for the learning of all students. Teachers must teach from the curriculum of the district, and administrators must monitor the delivery of this curriculum in every classroom. Access of Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students to upper level classes and specialized programs designed to encourage and accelerate students in the learning process must be the norm rather than the exception. Data from testing conducted throughout the year must be used to modify the instructional program so that learning gaps can be filled quickly and effectively. And finally, results from state-mandated testing from individual teachers must be analyzed so that the practices of more successful teachers become the norm for all classrooms.

Equally devastating to the future well-being of the district are its financial practices that build deficit budgets based on inflated student enrollment figures, treat cash-flow problems as normal, and fail to reduce staff when enrollment decreases. Three- to five-year financial projections must be developed so that the board and administrative staff can gradually get the financial picture of the district back in line with generally acceptable standards for public school systems. Assistance from the Region 20 Educational Service Center or directly from the Texas Education Agency should be sought immediately.

With the insight of the current superintendent and the support of the board, it is hoped that the audit report will enable the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District to focus on the systems that will propel its students to the next level of achievement. The report should be the impetus for the board, the administrators, the teachers, and the parents and community to refocus, align, and work as a team to accomplish great things and become recognized in more ways than are judged by the state's accountability system.